

# Mourning Becomes Electra

**By: Badmitton**

"Above all, one is struck by the same strange, life-like mask impression her face gives in repose." The Naked Sol is sunk, the resistance utterly destroyed. Ryuko has nothing left, but what does it matter? She has Junketsu, she has her mother, her sisters. What more could a girl ask for? Very much rated M. Possibly the most horrible thing I've ever written.

Status: ongoing

Published: 2015-07-02

Updated: 2015-08-02

Words: 10783

Chapters: 2

Rated: Fiction M - Language: English - Characters: Ryuko M., Satsuki K., Nui H., Ragyo K. - Reviews: 15 - Favs: 27 - Follows: 35

Original source: <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/11352747/1/Mourning-Becomes-Electra>

Exported with the assistance of [FicHub.net](http://FicHub.net)

# Mourning Becomes Electra

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

# Chapter 1

What have... literally what even have I written. This was supposed to be a one-shot, but it's already longer than my senior thesis, so I need a fucking break. Goddamn it \*rakes hands through hair.\* One simple what-if? oneshot and... this... comes out of me. Anyway, I've been looking at this too long, so I hate it, but I hope a few of you enjoy it anyway. I'll finish it for sure, but for now this is what I have.

Oh yeah, and inspired by H0saki... thanks, babe, you've destroyed me.

---

The newly setting sun cast whorls of slick purples and greens across the puddles of diesel bobbing serenely on the choppy water. It would have - might have - been beautiful, and to Matoi Ryuko, it was. A sudden explosion from deep within the bowels of the sinking ship set the glistening puddles aflame, burning atop the water like some deep magic, and Ryuko smiled, laughing a little, enjoying the acrid, new plastic toy smell of the burning fuel.

A sick spark of heat splashed through her mind and Junketsu squeezed his approval. She could feel his chuckle ripple against her skin, and she tossed her head back as tingles of unrefined pleasure coursed beneath her skin.

*Too high up.*

The fumes had turned the ripple of her laugh into a choked croak, but yet she did not close the hot red furnace of her mouth, laughing until her lungs cried out for mercy. Even to them she had no compassion. It was funny, foolish, and even the reverberation of her crow against the slowly sinking metal tickled her to near frenzy.

Her sister squirmed like a restless puppy, nearly dislodging herself, struggling towards the water below. Her hands pushed at Ryuko's

wrist, desperate to slip her hips through the hoop of her arm.

"You want down? Okay, let's go down."

Ryuko shifted her grip to under her arms, pulling her up and close. The smoke was burning her eyes, now, mixing with the salt in the air and scorching her nostrils with the overpowering stench of burning rubber. Ryuko licked her lips and the top of her mouth, making a halfhearted attempt to cleanse her palate.

The sound her sister made when she sank her teeth into her shoulder was brilliant, unforgettable. The pain sounded sweet and low, like the thrumming of a cello, overlaid with the bright, high tinkling of surprise. Ryuko grinned into the bite, closing her swollen eyes as blood throbbed between her teeth, filling her mouth with the taste of salt and of copper coins that had been standing too long in a hot windowsill.

Throwing her arms out wide, Ryuko released both her sister and her hold on her dress' *senpu* mode. Another cry, this time less like a laugh, tore from between teeth still firmly clamped against Satsuki's *trapezius* as she fell head-first towards the water. A thrill of inexpressible joy tore from her scalp down through every nerve in her spine as the wind ripped at her hair. The flavor of the blood pouring into her mouth changed slightly, growing darker and dirtier with her sister's involuntary terror at the sudden drop. The fact, *the idea*, that she could literally taste fear paralyzed her in morbid ecstasy.

Junketsu forgave her her shortsightedness, pleased also with the fresh blood soaking into his collar. He pulled them effortlessly out of the less-than-controlled dive, smoothly resuming *senpu* mode. Disappointed with the shortness of the fall rather than appalled at her own lack of forethought, Ryuko wrapped her arms around Satsuki before gravity could tear her away, releasing the painful grasp on her shoulder. Feigning care, Ryuko licked away the blood and mockingly kissed the bruise she had left, crooning giddily into Satsuki's ear.

"Here. You want to be all clean for your friends, don't you?"

---

They're smiling, soft, sad smiles, but smiling all the same. Though huddled on some ragged shore, carried by some makeshift raft of rubble and destruction, hope burns fierce. Mrs. Mankanshoku, in her absurd way, has managed to concoct an abundance of croquettes, and they, soaked to the skin but alive, alive eat and protect their strength.

Look, Nonon and Uzu are fighting, bickering over some childish distinction. Mikisugi for once in his ageless existence wishes he has more clothes. He's shivering, and Mako offers her damp scarf, staring pleasantly at his glowing nudity.

A long silence reigns. The white sand seems to be glowing in the thick darkness, keeping at bay the damp smothering of the velvet air. Small animals rustle in the bushes, sending splatters of dew down the slick, grey-green leaves. Startled, repressed shell-shock rising, they all huddle just a little closer.

"We'll find them again." Gamagoori proclaims suddenly with that booming, ridiculous steadfastness. "The Naked Sol may have been destroyed, but our wills have not! So long as I live, Lady Satsuki will have her shield." Nonon flinches and looks away.

"She's not here, idiot," she mumbles under her breath, "Ryuko took her with her."

"All the same!" if his voice were capable of rising above a middle C, Gamagoori would have screeched. Animosity suddenly dissolved, Sanegeyama leans over to bump Nonon with his elbow.

"We'll make it, Jakuzure. We all will. Look at us, we all got the stuff. We're alive, aren't we?"

Couldn't it be true?

Good God, please let it be true.

---

"Sats, babe, look. I don't think they can hear you anymore. Well, y'know, 'cause they're all dead."

Satsuki was getting harder to hold on to. Suddenly enraged that her sport was being spoiled by her sister's desperate thrashing, Ryuko gathered a fistful of hair and pulled until she could see the throbbing of Satsuki's heart through the vein pressed tight against the taut tendons in her neck. "Hey, look, maybe not." An unusual movement in the water below had caught Ryuko's attention, and she let go of her sister to point, holding her only by her hair. It took a long moment for Satsuki to lever her eyes down far enough to see with her head held up, but it was well worth the wait to hear her breath catch sharply in her throat. Ryuko rubbed her sooty eyes with the back of her hand, smearing her white glove with filth. Slowly, barely able to contain the ferocious glee that threatened to crack her ribcage wide open, she descended slowly, careful not to let the flame splash up to lick her.

Trapped amongst puddles of liquid fire, a blonde head bobbed weakly, arms barely sculling the water. Clinging to the thumb held valiantly above the water, Mako shouted encouragements to an exhausted Gamagoori. Ryuko cocked her head, content to watch and hover. Satsuki was shouting again, reaching up to grip the wrist of the hand that held her. Silly Satsuki. Victory was hers, anger dissipated. Why bother shouting back? A flutter of crinkled black caught her eye and Ryuko chuckled.

"Don't take you boots off, stupid, your feet'll bur-AH, BITCH!" A sudden, searing pain had her reeling with rekindled rage. Her sliced hand held only a fistful of hair that took up with the wind to wrap around her bloodied palm. Though the wound zipped neatly, tightly, a cataclysmal eruption of anger splashed and seared through Ryuko's veins, setting Junketsu abuzz as if with demonic laughter. Her teeth ground until they cracked, healed, then ground again to their breaking point.

"Fuck..." She paused to take a few ragged gasps, "... YOU!"

"Satsuki-sama!"

She had adopted a rapid Tarzan swim - careless, exhausting - to reach him, barely skirting the sections of searing hot water in her haste. Spitting out a mouthful of burning salt water, Satsuki reached out her hand, ready to take him around the arm in a cross-chest hold, ready to keep him from drowning, even if only for a little while, even if it meant she would drown in his stead. He waved her off, trying to keep her away, pushing Mako towards her. He couldn't speak, his face was burned. Satsuki was having none of it. She threaded her arm under his.

*Crack*

A sudden streak of metallic red, a spray of deeper cochineal, unbearable horror and death to the soul. Lungs already filled with water, he sank quickly, head broken open by the rounded handle of the scissor. Ryuko pounced on Satsuki, wrapping both her arms and legs around her, yanking her out of the water, squeezing her hard. She was screaming, now, really screaming. They both were.

Ryuko jerked at the sudden weight added to her back. Mako had her arms around her neck.

"Ryuko-chan! Ryuko, Ryuko, Ryuko!" Her tears were like a waterfall, slipping down between Ryuko and Junketsu, soaking the threads that bound them together. For once, Mako had no words, only that unfathomable love. Her fists smacked against Ryuko's head as if beating sense into her, her eyes still gushing as she cried for Gamagoori and for her friend who had killed him. Ryuko tried to shake her off, but it was no use. Her hold unshakable. Eyes narrowing, anger rising into a near-solid ball of heat in her throat, Ryuko purposefully dropped Satsuki back into the water.

"Junketsu zenkan !"

---

She's naked and trembling as Ryuko tosses her carelessly at her mother's feet. Ragyo can't help but smile, leaning over to affectionately ruffle at her second daughter's hair. Ryuko all but purrs as she pushes her head into that loving hand.

"I knew I could trust you to take care of that unpleasant business, my sweet child." Ryuko just grins, wiping at some blood crusting on her cheek as she plants a foot between Satsuki's shoulder blades, pushing her hard into the dirty floor. Her mother chides her, tugging at her lips with the tips of her fingers. "Be sweet to your sister, you don't want her last thought to be a bad one, do you?"

Ryuko's brows are furrowing, looking suspiciously up at her grinning mother. Her distrust fades suddenly and a sooty, croaking laugh barks from between her lips. She shoves her sister over onto her back and sits on her, latching her fingers onto her face. Kiryuin Ragyo turns away, brushing at her dress as if to remove some small speck of dust.

"Kill her. She is useless to me now."

The red scissor, now made small and manageable, flashes suddenly, throwing reflections of color across the dark puddle quickly staining the floor.

Wouldn't it have been better if it were true?

---

Short freedom makes renewed captivity unbearable. Not long enough to give her body relief in healing, her escape only offered her stiffness and pain. Every breath felt like a yanking, shuddering pull on the starter rope of the rusty, metaphorical chainsaw that had been shoved into her lungs. Still, somehow, Satsuki felt above it.

Pain to her was like those breath training exercises for veteran swimmers. Three strokes without breathing, then five, seven, nine. Over the jump between seven and nine, the body beings to panic, begging to thrash and struggle for the air that lies mere inches away.



Still, there's a quiet place, controlled, calm, inside the mind of the athlete. The body is acknowledged, not ignored, but set aside. Satsuki hung quietly inside this calm place, staring up at the bundle of fibers that held her wrists to the chain from which she had so recently shorn herself free.

*More comfortable than the shackles. Fewer edges.* Still, she wondered how long the calm would last. Eventually, she would need to breathe.

The screech of metal on metal didn't bother her *per se* . The sheer lack of necessity, however, rankled her nerves. Satsuki bit her tongue, shifting her shoulders, putting all her weight on one, then the other, in quick succession.

"Harime," she barked suddenly, sounding more annoyed than anything. "If you continue to sharpen those pliers in some pathetic excuse for a scare tactic, you'll ruin them." Nui banged the tool against the bars, the sound echoing against the single round wall. Satsuki jumped involuntarily, and Nui giggled, clanging the bars again. To her great surprise, Satsuki found herself jumping again, and bit her lip to still herself for the third shock. The blow struck her heavily between the shoulder blades.

Nui wasn't stupid enough to strike her spine, but the blow still set her teeth on edge and had her gasping for air. Satsuki could almost *hear* the muscles in her arms tearing at the sudden strain. Still, she didn't lift her head up for air, keeping calm and quiet even as her body spasmed forcefully. Nui cocked her head, amused, stepping around to face her and dragging a finger down Satsuki's lateral line, poking it into her bellybutton. Sneering, Satsuki tightened her stomach around the invading digit, lifting a knee to shove her away. With one hand, Nui grabbed her under the knee, twisting her fingers under the tendons as she snapped the pliers under her nose.

"What, do they look ruined to you? I think you're right, the teeth have been rubbed away." Satsuki rolled her eyes. Nui thought she was cute. Nui was very wrong. "I might have to squeeze them extra tight

to get them to hold on. " She paused to boop her lightly on the nose with the closed pliers. Satsuki didn't reply, choosing instead to glare balefully at the girl who was thrumming with sadistic mirth. Nui's expression suddenly changed, contorting with frightening swiftness into animal rage. The closed pliers cracked into Satsuki's jaw. A low groan rumbled in the back of her throat, barely loud enough to be heard. Nui's face softened again and she leaned back, settling her weight on one hip.

"Aren't you feeling musical today?"

"Thank you," Satsuki mumbled, spitting out a molar. "You've saved me the trouble of having my wisdom teeth removed."

"Those should have fallen out the moment you decided to turn your back on Lady Ragyo."

"How very like you to capitalize on some poor innocent misnomer." Nui closed her eyes, smiling with lips tight and closed. She pressed a thumb into the corner of Satsuki's mouth, freeing the blood inside to run down her chin. Satisfied, she licked her thumb and stepped back.

Satsuki opened one eye, scrutinizing Nui. Something wasn't right. Her eye was shifting and even her smiles seemed sour, her usual relaxed countenance overshadowed by something... bigger. The corner of Satsuki's mouth twitched.

*My sister is so easy to read.*

"Tell me, Harime, how do you like being second-best?" Nui's ear twitched, but she looked away, her eye jittering slightly. "How do you like living in the shadow of yet another big sister, eh? Nui started to smile, showing each tooth one-by-one until every molar was visible. "How do you like being second-best in every way? Does it hurt you? Does it hurt you that Mother now has a daughter she bore herself, who can wear a kamui, who is better than you in every way?"

Mouth still frozen into that wide grin, eyes glassy and body stiffly trembling, Nui snatched up Satsuki's ankle, slamming the pliers shut around her false nail.

"I don't know, Satsuki-chan." Her voice was squeaky, high-pitched as though her voice had never broken. "Does this hurt you?"

She kept her head underwater.

---

*"Mom! Sats won't give me the baby pig!" Ryuko ran up to her mother, panting and flushed with rage, fat childish fists clenching and unclenching as if they didn't know what to do. Ragyo picked her up and cuddled her daughter against her with one arm, holding slightly back so she could look at her face. Ryuko aggressively bunched the fabric of her mother's dress under her fists, chin crinkling like old cellophane. "I want it and she won't give it to me!" Ragyo smiled softly, almost sadly, brushing her daughter's hair from her face.*

*"If you want it, sweet Ryuko, you deserve to have it." her face suddenly hardened, the tiniest tweak of a smile at the very corner of her mouth. "Take it, Ryuko, and punish her for keeping you from what you desire. We are her gods, and the gods of all like her." Ryuko furrowed her brow, but reckoned she had got the gist of it.*

*"Fuckin' Dad won't let me touch her!" Kiryuin Ragyo laughed, ruffling her already tousled hair before setting her on the floor.*

*"I'll take care of Soichiro. Run along now." Ryuko did as she was told, somehow managing to cackle despite her age.*

Ryuko lifted her head from where it leaned against her hand, lounging on the steps with her legs bent and her scissor across her knees. Holding her free hand in front of her face, she traced her thumb over the place where Satsuki had cut her. There was no wound, no jagged landscape of a scar, but she stroked the imaginary line over and over in some intense fixation. She paid no mind to the places grazed while they fought on the naked sun, nor even to the

wound where she had tried to stuff that filthy dishrag excuse for a kamui into her chest. Then they had been equals, then, warriors. There was something about that defiance in utter defeat that rankled Ryuko's nerves, setting her on a humming, fixed-stare edge.

*Who the fuck does she think she is... some hero ?* The thought sent a whirring top of hatred spinning deep in the center of her chest, throwing sparks of nervous energy into her limbs. Her fingertips tapped erratically on the plane of her own cheekbone before brushing the wisps of damp hair from her reddened eyes. *I'll show her, I'll show her, I'll teach her a thing or two... Fucking Kiryuin Satsuki still thinks she's the fuckin' greatest. I hate you, I hate you, I hate y-*

"Mother," her own words did not cut off her train of thought, the repetition continuing like a throbbing, swollen drum behind her eyes even as she spoke. "Do you remember what you told me when I was little, when Sats took my pig?"

"Of course." She didn't. It never happened. It didn't matter. Memories are flexible, made to further the future. Solidifying the past is for fools. Ryuko hopped to her feet, swinging her scissor up to clang against Junketsu's epaulette.

"She never fucking learns!" Ryuko neither noticed nor cared that she didn't finish her thought. The emotion that boiled beneath her lowest ribs was difficult for her to express, to deal with. "We teach her every lesson in the goddamn book and she still thinks she's the Queen of France!" Ragyo nodded sleepily, bypassing the urgent need to explain the French revolution to her teenage daughter, and instead kept one eye carefully trained on Ryuko as her motions grew more frenetic. Ryuko had begun to pace, chewing on her lip as false memories, like memories in a dream, were accepted as soon as they surfaced. She almost startled, her stomach jumping in hot flutters as Ragyo's cool fingers brushed at her hair.

"Shh, my baby," her voice a soothing coo, she folded a jittering Ryuko into her arms. For a brief moment, Junketsu strained towards

her, but the sudden, dangerous tightening of her arms stilled him instantly. Ryuko shuddered, eyes wide and glazed as the white dress rippled and crawled over her skin like a thousand liquid centipedes. A bright light, a single one-dimensional point of pleasure enveloped her completely, and Ryuko relaxed, sighing, into her mother's arms. Ragyo laughed, more like a small puff of air than anything, and kissed Ryuko's cheek.

"You're a good girl, Ryuko." Ryuko hummed and nuzzled into her mother's shoulder, now completely at ease. "In time, all will be as it should."

"We are her gods..." Startled, Ragyo pulled back a little, a wide smile breaking suddenly over her face as she realized what Junketsu had done. She laughed again, this time aloud, rippling in delight for her newly-made child.

---

*I am alive .*

A ragged breath.

*So long as I am alive.*

Another.

*There's a chance .*

A tiny, rebellious voice poked out through her subconscious mind.

*I am alive... but they are not. Who is left to save?*

Satsuki choked, caught unprepared for the wave of emotion the poured suddenly from her heart, flooding her completely and slipping from her eyes in fat salty tears. The tiniest of sobs, no louder than the beat of a moth's wing, slid free and broke the perfect monotony of her breathing. She could still see Gamagoori slipping beneath the waves, feeling his blood splatter against her face, seeing him still

reaching for her with his last ounce of strength. The tears continued to fall, the salt scratching like sandpaper against her scraped cheeks.

A sudden flood of unwanted imaginings crushed against her mind. She hadn't been there, hadn't seen them die, but her thoughts acted as though she had, presenting to her the gruesome spectacle. Houka and Iori, covered in oil and burning alive even as they bobbed in the ocean; Nonon held underwater by a twisted steel beam, desperate to reach the unattainable light that filtered through the water; Soroi, crippled by age, unable to swim any longer. Satsuki's body spasmed, her chain shrieking as it twisted against her weight, giving voice to her pain. She could still smell the smoke, taste the burning oil.

It was *real* .

It was *over*.

She had *failed*.

Her head fell back, sending the relentless tears flooding into her ears, drowning out any sound and leaving her in perfect silence. She continued to struggle as she forced the images to fade, pushing them into a place in her mind where she could close and lock the door. The pain was... unbearable. Her mouth cracked open, a howl ready to tear free from her chest.

Suddenly, before she could make a sound, it all just *stopped* . The door was closed and locked, she could think clearly again. Satsuki lifted her head, stilling the trembling of her limbs.

*Ryuko. I still have her. She needs me.*

Satsuki closed her eyes, taking a moment to scrub her cheeks dry on her arms. *If I can get through to her, get her back, all may not be lost.* She didn't blame her for... for what she'd done. It wasn't her.

Not really. Surely? Taking as deep a breath as she could, Satsuki settled into her thoughts, teeth firmly pressed together.

She didn't cry again for a long, long time.

---

The humming of hundreds of sewing machines somehow both soothed and rankled all of Nui's nerves simultaneously. Halfhearted, she leaned over the table, her sewing scissors hanging limply between the fingers of her left hand. With her right, she tossed and jangled Satsuki's false toenails, treating them like ancient knucklebones. Carelessly, she tossed them onto the table, fascinated by the way they sliced her open for the tiniest of moments. All the grime and blood had been buffed away by the obsessive rubbing of her thumbs, and so they shone of the purest obsidian as they rocked to a still on the surface of the table.

Leaning her chin on her hand, Nui stared at her new trinkets as if expecting mystic runes to appear and tell her her future. Trapped in animal fascination, she lightly tapped the edge of one to set it in motion again.

*How do you like being second-best?*

Gritting her teeth, Nui pressed down suddenly on the nail, ignoring the tweak of pain as it sliced her thumb open. The blood slid with remarkable speed down onto the cloth covering the table, only to be instantly absorbed by the pure-white fabric. Beneath her hands, Koketsu, still barely nascent, shuddered at the offering. For a long moment, Nui held her breath.

*Maybe...*

A hot splatter of blood sprayed over her face as the shinra violently rejected the gift. Nui spread her hands quickly over the fabric, stilling it as it flapped as though coughing. Gritting her teeth, she freed one hand to wipe at her face, smearing and staining her eyepatch with brown.

"Okay!" her voice was quiet, but the high register had it sounding like a screech. Angry, she snatched up the nails and smashed them point-down into the fabric, pinning shinra Koketsu to the table. Breathing heavily, she stood and backed away. For a moment, she had no pride in her work, only sudden and intense shame.

Harime Nui jumped as the door to her workshop opened. She didn't turn around, only placing her hands on her hips and pretending to be overseeing the work of her slaves. Her good eye jittered in her head as she plastered a smile over her face.

"Is everything going well?"

"Oui, Mother."

"Hah, are you kidding? Did you eat a rat or something, sis?" Her shoulders raised, nerves put on edge by that rough voice. Eyes darting to the left, Nui smeared at the blood on her face, finally turning and shifting her attention to the catwalk above her.

"Nothing to worry about, *nee-chan* ." Her smile was like spun sugar, hiding the rot growing inside. Her smile faded as she saw her mother slide her arm around Ryuko's waist, fingers stroking at her hip. Nui raked her eye over Ryuko's kamui-clad body, swallowing harshly. "How can I help, Mama?" Ragyo waved her hand, a half-smile quirking her cheek.

"Ah, do I need a reason to visit my children? No, Ryuko and I were just on our way to see your sister. She must be getting lonely."

"Can I-?"

"No, no. You're needed here. Come along, Ryuko." Winking, Ryuko blew her a kiss. Making sure their mother wasn't looking, Nui snatched it out of the air and mimed crushing it between her fingers. Ryuko laughed, far too loudly in Nui's opinion. As soon as Ryuko had left the room, Ragyo fixed her with a thoughtful stare.



"ferrum ferro acuitur et homo exacuit faciem amici sui, ita vero?"

"Mama..."

Nui flinched as the door closed loudly.

*As iron sharpens iron... Don't think you're not still mine, Matoi Ryuko.*

---

Kiryuin Ragyo's voice was mocking, slow.

"You know but little of the world, since you are ignorant of what commonly occurs in knight-errantry."

Ryuko watched carefully, licking her lips, as Satsuki opened one eye. She wanted to *taste* the bruising there, wanted to take those sapphire eyes and wear them on a necklace. Her preexisting hatred mixed gruesomely with the sudden influx of desire to fill her with some emotion she couldn't name. Jerkily, Ryuko stepped forward, but Ragyo stopped her with an outstretched hand.

"I am no Don Quixote." Her voice was low, roughened by thirst and pain. Ryuko had never heard anything more beautiful. She had never hated anything more.

"No? Rocinante, then, mindlessly carrying on the idiot whims of your father." To that, Satsuki made no reply, closing her eye again and rocking one leg to set herself gently swinging. For one ridiculous second, she looked easy and carefree, like a soldier in a Norman Rockwell painting enjoying lying in a hammock on a breezy summer afternoon. Ryuko could feel the heat under her eyes increase. She shouldn't be allowed to look that way, not even for a second.

*Who does she think... where does... who does she think she is?* Ragyo had left her outside the cage, and she dared not enter. Instead, she pressed her face between the bars, feeling the cold metal press hard against each of her cheekbones.

Ragyo hummed and brushed at Satsuki's hair with the tips of her fingers. Large chunks were missing from where she had sliced herself free from Ryuko's grip, leaving her looking like a straggled stray. A single thread sliced in a serpentine arc, whizzing as it tore the air. What remained of Satsuki's hair fell to the ground, leaving her with a surprisingly neat bob. Satsuki hissed and jerked her head back as the thread sliced her cheek open from the corner of her mouth to the edge of her cheekbone.

Ragyo smiled a little and flicked her fingers. The thread, moving as though autonomous, neatly stitched the wound closed, stopping the flow of blood instantly.

How kind.

Ryuko didn't know what she expected as her mother stepped towards her sister, cupping her face and whispering into her ear. She couldn't hear the words spoken as those hands slid down Satsuki's form, gentle and soft on that tattered body. At first Ryuko didn't understand. Frowning, she shifted to push her face into a different pair of bars. Still unsatisfied with her perspective, she moved again, rattling her knuckles against the metal as she paced like a caged animal.

She had wanted her mother to beat her, hurt her until she cried, but instead she was doing... this? Those special moments Ryuko shared with her mother were being given freely to that useless piece of shit? Still, her feet were suddenly glued to the floor, eyes wide and staring. Clamping her teeth against her knuckle, she watched.

Was it horrible? Beautiful? She couldn't say. Ryuko couldn't keep her eyes away from Satsuki, drinking in the firm lines of her abdomen as her stomach clenched violently, the way her bloodied toes curled against her mother's dress, listening to nothing other than her ragged, gasping breath.

Disgusting.

Exquisite.

Those brilliant eyes were lidded, hiding hatred behind involuntary pleasure. Ryuko gasped, suddenly smashing her knees together, leaning heavily against the metal before her. Ragyo finally finished her work, smearing her fingers against Satsuki's flank as she stepped away. Ryuko continued to stare, eyebrows shooting into her hairline as she witnessed something in Satsuki that she had never seen before:

Shame.

Her laugh shattered the quiet, ecstatic in sudden realization. Ryuko's canines flashed in the dim light as she threw her head back; and despite the wideness of her smile, her eyes did not crinkle, did not soften. That laugh was eminently cruel, a reveling in another's torment. She understood.

Her mother was suddenly beside her, a hand flat on her chest to still the vibration of her voice. Ragyo opened her mouth, no doubt to relay some wisdom, but Ryuko's lips were suddenly upon hers, grateful, reverent, full of passion. Surprised, Kiryuin Ragyo pulled away, one eyebrow quirking. She smiled, eyes closing as she covered her mouth softly with the tips of her fingers. Ryuko stood back, mouth open wide and eyes finally wrinkling at the corners. Junketsu hummed, squeezing her tight and again flooding her with inexpressible bliss. Her mother patted her head, content with the unspoken exchange, and turned to go.

"Be gentle with your new pet, Ryuko," she warned, still cheerful, "It will reflect badly upon you if you kill it right away." Ryuko's head tilted to the side a moment before she nodded, her smile now easy and lopsided. Her eyes flicked to Satsuki and then back again to her mother, suddenly quizzical.

*How could something so beautiful make something so insufferable?* Ryuko shrugged, not amused by her own thought, and stepped through the open door of the cage, slamming it behind her.



## Chapter 2

So this chapter used to be a beautiful example of human ingenuity, but then my computer crashed and I lost most of it, so I cobbled together the pieces. Not nearly as good as the original, but whatever, the plot is basically the same. Phew, I need to get my game together and finish this before school starts, or I will be in a hot pot for sure!

---

It was several minutes before Ryuko could move. She could only *stare* . Her hands twitched, ready to reach and touch that soft skin, trembling and slick with sweat. It was like there was nothing left of her, only skin and bones and bright blue eyes. She was fascinated by the way the chain held her, shoulders stiff, skin tight over her muscles, but hips hanging low and loose, legs unhindered. Satsuki was a sculpture, and her beauty was not lost on her sister.

Ryuko licked her lips, breathing through her nose as she finally latched her fingers onto Satsuki's hips. She jerked at the sudden touch, still oversensitive. Ryuko laughed, rubbing at her hipbones with her thumbs.

"I knew this girl, okay?" she began, her tone a rumbling purr. "Are you listening?"

Silence.

"Are you fucking *listening*? "

A shine of metal. Distinctly *red* shadows. No blood. Not yet.

"I'm listening to you, sister." The voice that answered was torn beyond hoarse, shrieking and rumbling like cinder on cinder. Still, tenderness softened that edge and spoke out to gash against Ryuko's constricted mind.

Briefly baffled, Ryuko stepped back, snatching up and pointing her blade defensively. Defensive against helplessness. A long moment passed as Ryuko opened her mouth to breathe, gasping at the air before Junketsu caught her up, stroking her like cat from head to tail.

"I'm listening." Eyes growing vacant, smile reestablished with lazy aplomb, Ryuko took one step forward, drawing close enough that Junketsu brushed against her sister's knees. Passing her scissor behind Satsuki's back, she gripped it with both hands and pulled her forward until their bodies were pressed firmly together.

One the pinnacle of human evolution, the apex of history, the other naked and held together with will and sinew.

"I used to know a girl." Ryuko's voice was a whisper, but forced to the point of a scream. "She used to stand on top of a tower and look down on everyone. Stomping her feet and glowing like a fucking nightlight." She paused to lick the blood from Satsuki's chin, dragging her tongue up her jaw until she finally reached her ear. Catching the lobe between her teeth, Ryuko tugged on her ear, growling the rest of her words between her teeth. "Do you know where she is? I need to talk to her."

"She doesn't exist. She never existed." Unsatisfied, cherishing the rage that began to bubble again under her skin, Ryuko pulled her sister's ear until her face was forced to turn into her arm.

"You callin' me a liar?"

"Not lying. Blind."

The rage, confined within her veins, exploded suddenly, tearing free to saturate her muscles, poison her organs. The scissor dropped with a one-two clang to the hard floor and Ryuko's hands grasped roughly at Satsuki's head, thumbs pressing threateningly against her eyes.

"Say that again, cunt."

She didn't, she knew better. They stayed that way for a good while, Ryuko's shoulder's hunching, breath heavy and hot as her muscles trembled. Satsuki swung softly, her eyelashes fluttering and tickling Ryuko's thumbs. "So where is she?"

Satsuki sighed.

"She is here."

"Good. I have something for her."

Ryuko released her and stood back, licking at her bared fangs, nearly chortling. It was so *good*, wonderful, even. So long just waiting, fighting for even a chance at putting the great Kiryuin Satsuki in her place. It had finally come to an end. Junketsu laughed, purring against her skin, buzzing through every nerve. Affirming, loving.

Satsuki looked down, eyes scrolling as Ryuko moved faster than she could see. Her eyes only just managed to catch a glimpse of her fist as it smashed into her stomach. There was no time to brace, the air audibly leaving her body. It felt like an eternity before she could breathe again, before the black spots stopped their dancing before her eyes. Blood flooded her throat, stinging against her teeth as she convulsed.

The blow was uncalculated, animal, and for a split second, Satsuki could almost believe Ryuko was herself again, only anger and hurt fighting for answers. No cruelty. No lust. Tears pricked at the corners of her eyes as a hot stream of blood spilled down her chin.

"Ryu-Ryuko..." If she could only get through to her. "You never wanted... this. Think... of what you want, what you've always wanted."

"I want you to shut the fuck up!" She hit her again, the heel of her hand cracking into her ribs, driving out any semblance of thought. Satsuki shut her eyes, her own teeth catching and tearing her lips.

Through the searing white fuzz that clouded her vision and stuffed her mind with cotton, she just managed to catch sight of her sister's face.

Twisted, hollow. Destroyed. Even as her own body begged her to howl out her agony in the solidity of the law of club and fang, the quiet, unshaken voice that rested deep inside her chest whispered sadly:

*Her pain is more than you have ever known.*

Satsuki choked, eyes cracking wide as she silently accepted another blow, staring at Ryuko, staring through her.

She could only feel sorry for her.

---

Her eye shifted, searching in the shadows for an answer she knew she wouldn't receive. Still, it didn't keep her from trying.

"Ah, it is exhausting," her mother hummed in response, no emotion revealed. Nui bit her lip, keeping her back turned. "It will be such a relief when all this is over, no?"

*And me?*

*Me?*

"Yes. Peace at last. It will be superb." She could nearly hear her smile. Nui laughed, tone light, hiding the edging points of her questions.

"Will you still use Satsuki-chan to power Koketsu now that Ryuko has come to her senses?"

*You wouldn't rather it be me?*

*And me, Mama?*



She felt her move behind her, shuddering as those long hands grasped and kneaded at her shoulders. She tried so hard not to lean, not to sigh. Her mother's voice had grown dreamy, softer even than normal.

"She will feel nothing. Absolutely nothing. The fibers will drink up sensation before it ever reaches her. She will live out her days in silence, the command to scream devoured even before it leaves her mind." Nui closed her eye, eyelashes fluttering. "At times, when I see fit, I will open her web and touch her with the tips of my fingers." Ragyo emphasized her point by raising her hands and only softly brushing her fingers over Nui's back, bare over the cut of her dress. Nui shuddered in response, knees weak as she lived through the fantasy woven in the softest of words. A fantasy not made for her.

"And she will yearn for me. After all her struggle, all her defiance, she will beg for my touch, to be freed from the empty home she has made for herself, to feel something, anything. What now fills her with revulsion will consume her thoughts, will be that which drives her mad with desire." She leaned closer, voice deepening as she whispered into Nui's trembling ear. "Love and hate, hate and love. Absolute domination." Nui barely suppressed a moan as her mother stepped away, suddenly all business. Quickly, she forced a barking giggle, pretending she had not just been struck to the core.

"It is just as she deserves, Ragyo-sama!"

*Why not me?*

*Why?*

Nui just managed to catch the look that Ragyo gave her out of the corner of her eye. Pleased, cool, and fully knowing what she had done. Nui clenched her fists, lightly curling her fingers into loose, tiny balls.

Her mother had found the perfect way to torture them both. Her fists grew tighter. It bound them together, perfect inverses. Satsuki

wanted only the solitude and freedom that Nui so desperately hated while Nui herself yearned only for that loving attention. It would have been easy, so easy, for her mother to give her what she wanted.

Too easy, it seems.

Nui only just kept herself from narrowing her eye, only just maintaining that sweet façade.

"Will it soon be finished, Harime?"

It was finished, Koketsu ready to be donned.

"Soon, Mother, but not just yet. "

---

*Ryuko could see her, that glossy head poking up from behind the bed. She knew that she didn't know they were playing hide and seek, that her favorite place to read was in that crack between the bed and the wall. She knew she wasn't being fair.*

*Gotcha . Silently she crept to the outer edge of the bed, careful not to put her weight on the mattress lest it shift and give her away. With a scream, Ryuko pounced, all her weight falling on Satsuki's shoulder, pinning her to the ground. She began to laugh as she squirmed in surprise and struggle, but that laugh turned to a growl as Satsuki's thrashing sent her head into the nearby wall, sending pain shooting through her forehead. Angrily she gathered up fistfuls of hair and pulled.*

*"Ryuko, stop!" She didn't. Why should she? "I don't want to play right now!" Ryuko dragged her out from behind the bed, smile returning.*

*"But I want to!" her lower lip pushed out in a mock-pout. "Come on, Sats! Don't be such a baby!" Ryuko grabbed her wrists. "Don't you want to wrestle?"*

*"No." Satsuki suddenly went limp. Ryuko huffed and dropped as the wrists in her hands fell suddenly to the floor. "Go play with Nui." She didn't move, barely breathed, eyes defying her.*

*No fun.*

*Ryuko bared her teeth, a mocking monkey grimace, She shook Satsuki, trying to get her to move. "Come... on! If I want to play then you have to play."*

*"I do not." Her eyes were cold, staring up at her, making her uncomfortable. Ryuko stopped short, frozen, before snorting and covering them with a hand.*

*"Yuh huh. Mom says."*

*"Where is she, then? Is she going to make me?" Spluttering, Ryuko stood and kicked Satsuki lightly in the ribs.*

*"She'll make you pay!"*

*"Go get her, then, but what do you care? If you tell Mother you won't get to play with me anyway. Save your breath and go play with Nui."*

*"But I don't want to play with Nui! I want to play with you!" Her eyes were filling with frustrated tears, and for a moment Satsuki's face wavered, eyebrows drawing together.*

*"All right, then, I'll-aah!" Ryuko's foot lashed out again, cracking hard into the ribs under her arm. Before Satsuki had time to recover her breath, Ryuko sat on her, putting her full weight on her stomach. A clumsy fist lashed out and cracked against her cheek. Small fingers clutched at the front of Satsuki's shirt, bunching the fabric and tearing buttons.*

*Ryuko's face was a mask of rage, hot tears spilling down her cheeks and dripping onto her sister's neck. Still Satsuki lay limply on the*

*ground, refusing to move, refusing to provide entertainment, waiting for Ryuko to get bored and go away.*

*Ryuko started to scream, her own powerlessness enraging her, She pressed a hand to Satsuki's chest, redundantly holding her down, her other fist striking randomly. Satsuki didn't flinch. She didn't even close her eyes, just stared almost pityingly up at her frenetic sister.*

*"Stop looking at me!" she screeched, fist blackening Satsuki's eye. The hand on Satsuki's chest slipped, sliding inside her torn shirt. To Ryuko's surprise, she gasped suddenly, eyes sliding up and to the left with some recent memory. Her hands, suddenly claws, grabbed at Ryuko's wrist, twisting furiously. Ryuko fell to the floor with a thump, sobs hiccupping up into her chest.*

*Satsuki didn't quite run, but within the blink of an eye she was gone. Ryuko looked down at her hands, eyes drying slowly. Those fingers curled into fists as a slow smile crept over her face.*

*"Well, I guess I'm it."*

---

Nui hopped off the last step, tapping the toes of her heels against the edge to knock off the dust. Every so often she shook her head, pigtailed brushing against the grimy walls, dampening the shine of her hair, struggling to rid herself of the clouding web of hurt and rage.

*No... Ragyo-sama loves me.*

The thought rang false, the note louder than ever. Mindlessly, she opened the door before her. She didn't know why she went down there. She didn't care.

*I do what I want.*

*Then why don't you get what you want?*

Mind suddenly blank, she swung the door shut with hideous force, splitting the concrete with spiderwebbing cracks. Episode passing as quickly as it had come, Nui leaned on the door and took a good look at Ryuko. She hadn't even turned her head to look. Nui scoffed.

Her face was pressed into Satsuki's chest, shoulders hunching, frame rippling in low, frustrated growls. Her knee held her sister's legs apart, one hand wrapped around her waist, the other slotted between her thighs. Nui cocked an eyebrow in mental disgust, watching Ryuko's hand grind roughly against Satsuki, noting her elbow jerking spastically as she struggled to draw a reaction from her.

Nui sighed, wrapping a curl of her pigtail through her finger. Standing on her tiptoes, she tried to make eye contact with Satsuki, but her eyes were glazed, staring into space as she rested her chin on Ryuko's head, her mouth and brows twisted in nothing more than pain.

It was a travesty. The mere sight of it set Nui's teeth on edge.

She would be lying to herself if she claimed she had never thought about it -about just tearing her apart and destroying all the sensitivity her mother had spent years cultivating- on the days when the hatred grew unbearable, but on an aesthetic level it was horrifying, like using a thoroughbred to haul lumber.

Carefully, Nui snuck up behind Ryuko and wrapped her arms around her waist, nuzzling her face into her shoulder. Frustrated, Ryuko growled and attempted to swat her away.

"Goddamn it, can't you see I'm busy!" Nui snorted but released her.

"Busy making a mess of things, I see." Ryuko twitched and jerked away from Satsuki, leaving her to swing. Her mouth opened and closed for a moment before her eyes narrowed, the red beneath them swelling and deepening in color.

"She's mine." She growled, turning to face Nui, knees bending, joints cracking. "Mother gave her to me, she's mine." A deep thrumming shook the air, sounding as if it were coming from Junketsu himself. Nui rolled her eye. Despite the show, the animal display of power, she caught that glimmer of uncertainty in Ryuko's eyes, that embarrassed jump when she first spoke to her.

*And you're mine.*

"Of course she is, sweetie!" Nui smiled her brightest, laughed her sweetest. Satsuki opened one eye. She knew that sound. "But I'm always here for you if you need me."

"Oi. I don-"

"If you need help fixing your toys."

"Fuck of-" Her hand was suddenly over Ryuko's mouth, pressing over her lips.

"Shh..." Her other hand reached around and took Satsuki by the nape, deft fingers kneading and massaging, pushing in between the tendons. Ryuko just watched, teeth clenching, as Satsuki bit her lip and pushed back into the hand rubbing her neck. The tiniest of sighs escaped her mouth before her teeth returned to her lip again, crushing it until it bruised. Ryuko stared, eyes glazed, before something in her chest sparked.

Nui yawned as she dodged the red scissor that came flying towards her face, slipping in and out of the bars like a dog at an agility show.

*Predictable .*

"Don't you fucking touch!" Nui raised her hands lazily, turning her back on the slaving Ryuko.

"Fine, fine, have it your way, Ryuko-chan. I was just trying to help." Her fun played out, Nui pranced towards the door. "But I can *clearly*

see that help is not something you need." She quickly moved her head and let the scissor spin by harmlessly, blowing a kiss as she moved through the threshold.

Her smile faded as the door shut behind her. Leaning against the concrete and feeling the vibrations of Ryuko's howl through her shoulders, she examined her fingernails before sighing and moving to trot up the stairs.

*Idiot. I don't know what mother sees in her.* Startled, Nui stopped, one foot raised to take a step. A rare moment of agonizing self-realization dawned upon her, and her fist clenched, shaking.

*What did I see in her?*

---

Five days later:

*She's lying to me .*

Ragyo narrowed her eyes, staring down at her as she loomed above on the catwalk. Nui's smile was sickening - sweet and syrupy. Like her with eyepatch, the glitter hid the rot beneath. Ragyo did not frown, did not reveal her suspicion.

"Is He yet awake, my sweet?"

Her eye contact never wavered, though her fingers twitched.

"Soon, Lady Ragyo"

*Liar .*

She was down the stairs, fingers curling over her shoulder, breath soft in her ear.

"Are you sure?"

A nervous chuckle, forced light and high.

"Just a few more adjustments."

Ragyo stepped back, folding her fingers together, face serene.

"Of course."

*She's become ungrateful . Eyes narrowed, light intensified. No matter. We are nearing the end.* She knew what she wanted. What she always wanted. Lips curled. Teeth showing. *Shall I give her a taste?*

"Nui," her voice like velvet, purring, "You've done so well" Her fingers reached to trace lazy patterns between her shoulderblades. The goosebumps were immediate, the shudder perceptible. *You silly little thing.* "I think you deserve a special treat, a reward for your service."

"Mother?" She leaned in close again, lips nearly touching her ear.

"Will you join me in shinra Koketsu? Will you stay with me?" She could see the leap of her heart in the pulse behind her ear, the shift of her cheek as she barely suppressed a smile. *So easily...* She slid away, moving silently despite her stature. Out of the corner of her eye, she caught her leaning. "Of course..." she stopped, "Only when He is finished."

"Oui, Mama!" Her uncontained glee was endearing, yet nonetheless pathetic. Her back turned, Ragyo allowed her smile to falter and fall deeply into a frown.

*Your disappointment will be punishment enough.*

---

Her head leaned sleepily against the bars as she slouched on the floor, the picture of contentment as she observed her handiwork. She had become an impressionist, painting with every color - red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. Her body was her canvas and she had struck her with color, turning her bland white skin into a beautiful landscape. A crooked smile showed her teeth, glinting in



the stripe of light that fell across her face. The burbling under her ribcage had slowed, stilling to a simmer. Junketsu lay mostly silent upon her body, deactivated but not unsynchronized. Still they beat as one though the spikes above her shoulders had shifted back into epaulettes and his eyes had faded under her collar.

Ryuko played with the jar of honey in her hand, running her fingers over the bumps and ridges that formed the container into the shape of a bear. Absently she tossed it in the air, never removing her eyes from her piece. Like a visitor in an art museum, she was captivated, completely enraptured. A line of blood slid slowly from her collar, pooling in her navel before dripping down one leg. Ryuko followed it with her eyes, unable to look away. Even after she had put her brush down, her work continued to paint itself. Lovely.

She was starting to move again, her knee twitching in her first impulse to scrape her nails against the floor, nails that no longer existed. Her hair stuck to her neck, crusting red against her indigo cheek, fuzzy and tousled in the back. Ryuko let her own head loll back further, allowing the corners of her mouth to be dragged back by gravity as a gasping laugh broke from her throat.

*Silly, silly Satsuki.* Lifting a brow, she pulled her head upright. *Still so limp and soft.*

Finally standing, Ryuko unscrewed the cap on her honey, throwing aside the tapered top and plunging her fingers into the head of the bear, grinning as she imagined the honey inside was its brains. Dropping the rest of the jar carelessly to the floor, she held up the hand slick and sticky with honey to the light, fascinated by the way it glimmered in the light. Moving forward, she passed a hand roughly over Satsuki's body, sliding up from her hip until it rested just behind her shoulder blade. Shuddering at the uncaring touch over fresh welts, Satsuki finally lifted her head as her eyes fluttered open.

Humming a nonsensical tune, Ryuko unceremoniously forced a couple of fingers into her mouth. For a long moment she did nothing, merely letting the probing fingers do as they pleased. Finally she

seemed to register the honey, and her lips clamped hastily around Ryuko's fingers, desperate for nourishment. Ryuko giggled softly as her tongue tickled her hand, scraping roughly at the pads of her fingers as Satsuki sucked feverishly at her knuckles.

"Someone's hungry. You want some food, you big baby?" Ryuko pulled her hand free, frowning as her sister bit her to try to keep her from moving away. Her teeth barely made a mark, but it was the thought, the unacceptable reflex that set Ryuko off. Roaring, she slammed her fist into Satsuki's already purple belly, "Don't you bite me, you bitch!" She watched, panting, as Satsuki's eyes closed and she vomited what little was in her stomach. "I take the trouble to feed you and you just spit it out? You're a special kind of bounder, you know that?" Ryuko licked her own wrist, cleaning off the honey that had dribbled there, never taking her eyes off of Satsuki. Demeanor suddenly and frighteningly changing, Ryuko gently grasped her sister's head as her eyes began to roll.

"Shh, baby, it's okay, I didn't mean it. Stay awake for me okay?" Gently, Ryuko pried Satsuki's hair away from her face, combing out chunks of dried blood with her fingers. Leaning down she scooped up some more honey from the pool she had made from dropping her jar. "I'll give you some more, okay? C'mon." Her fingers probed at her mouth but Satsuki didn't respond this time, a line of blood and saliva spilling from her broken lips. "Fuck!"

Frustrated, Ryuko threw herself back against the bars again, sliding back into her sitting position. She moved to lay her head in her hands before realizing too late that her fingers were still covered in honey and spit. Disgusted, Ryuko shook her face against her shoulder.

Sighing, she forced herself to relax and wait for Satsuki to again show signs of life. She had learned quickly that not only was it no fun to play with her while she was unconscious, but also that it was not in her own interest. Ryuko had at one point brought her dangerously close to death, and for some reason that she could not name, the thought of killing her had grown less delicious - to the

point of becoming abhorrent. Slowly, her taste had changed, morphed by experience and the memories that slowly filled in the gaps of her consciousness - memories of her gossamer childhood slowly flooding her like stiff paint through a dry sponge. What she was, what she could be, still incomplete.

Ryuko closed her eyes, her head cradled between two bars. She could hear Satsuki begin to softly moan - it wouldn't be long now. That simmering inside jumped a little, leaking out up through her muscles and sliding just beneath her skin, creating a shifting warmth that had her purring in utter content.

She had never worn anything warmer.

---

*Ryuko bit her lip and gently pushed the door open, careful to move slowly lest it squeak. Another huge crack of thunder split the air, and she yelped, and, every pretense of stealth gone, rushed to the bed, yanking back the covers and diving in. Its other occupant stirred, sleepy.*

*" Ryuko," her voice cracked with youth and sleep, "What are you doing?" Ryuko unceremoniously latched onto Satsuki, wrapping her arms tightly around her waist and pushing her face into her hair.*

*" There's thunder..." she mumbled, "Hmm, warm."*

*" Yes. Life-fibers do not sap my extraneous bioenergy. It is instead dispelled through heat."*

*" Shut up, science-pants, and protect me from the thunder."*

*" You're twelve years old. Don't you think you're a little old for this?"*

*" I said, shut up." She carelessly rolled on top of Satsuki, bunching the covers up over her head so that they lay together alone in a cocoon of sheets and pillows. She pressed her face into the pillow*

*below so that they lay cheek-to-cheek. Doing as she was told, Satsuki lay silent, closing her eyes.*

*Ryuko lay still, feeling safe and cozy, the thumping of Satsuki's pulse pressed against her ear. Fascinated, she turned slightly to brush her lips against that pulse-point, wanting to be closer. Eyes sliding shut, she sighed as her sister shuddering beneath her touch lit a new, pleasant flame in her chest.*

*So... soft... she rubbed her lips against her throat a few times, relishing the silky texture, that flame growing brighter, catching and searing down unexpectedly. Gasping, Ryuko grabbed Satsuki's shoulders and pushed back, tossing the blankets back, pushing her hips down into hers. The sudden removal of cover set Satsuki's eyes suddenly alight as a shred of moonlight split the darkness and turned them into deep pools floating with thick shards of blue ice.*

*Stricken, Ryuko had no other choice. Grasping Satsuki's face firmly between her hands, she leaned down, and, unable to escape her pull, pressed her lips into hers.*

---

She kept her chin on her chest, saving her breath, her energy, hoping that staying still would ease her suffering. Body almost completely destroyed, she was struggling to come to come to terms with the idea that she wouldn't live much longer. Every breath brought the taste of blood and a stabbing pain deep inside her, her damaged organs crying for relief.

*I must live... for her.*

Indeed. There was no one left to live for. A shattered corner of her mind laughed at her for trying to save, to protect, the cause of her suffering.

*It's not her... not really . I must be here when she returns . Her stomach had long ago ceased to growl, but the pangs of hunger had yet to subside. Satsuki licked her teeth, making sure she hadn't*

missed any of the sweet syrup she had been offered. She grimaced at the taste of blood and stomach acid. Scraping her dry tongue against the roof of her mouth a few times, she fell still again, her mind going numb to escape the agony that assaulted her on every front.

A while later (she knew not how long), she registered the door creaking open. Satsuki raised her head, writhing briefly at the pain that tore down her spine and into her abdomen. *Is she gone?* When left alone she would sometimes allow herself to cry out, to struggle uselessly, and to shed a few tears. Though it worsened the state of her body, it slightly eased that vague emotional pain that throbbed in her chest and behind her eyes. Satsuki hated it, hated that she didn't understand it, but still felt as though she could not risk the chance of it consuming her. So she groaned when she was alone, mourning for a few brief moments what she had lost.

But no. It was only Nui entering the room, dancing as she had not seen her for quite some time. She was bubbling, practically overflowing with mirth. Satsuki forced herself to perk up, to take interest. A notable tension had wormed between Ryuko and Nui, and she planned to take advantage of it however she could.

*Set them on each other... It shouldn't be too difficult...* Another stab inside her lower belly reminded her of her life slipping away. *If I have enough time, that is.* She watched as Nui absolutely bubbled with glee, forcefully tugging Ryuko to her feet.

"It's time! It's finally time!"

"Time for what?" Ryuko's voice was harsh as she rubbed her eyes. Perhaps she had fallen asleep?

"Get Satsuki, get her down, Mama wants her!"

"Mother...?" Her face belied surprise and sudden realization, as if she had forgotten Ragyo entirely. Startled, Satsuki realized that she

had not seen her mother in quite some time. Before her escape, she had "visited" her every day, but now...

*How odd.*

Nui acted as though she had suddenly forgotten Ryuko, turning her attentions fully on her.

"Are you ready, sweet Satsuki? Ready for what you were made for?" Her fingers walked up her side, making her twitch. A cold hand pressed suddenly against her breast as Nui began to purr. "You're going to be so happy." Her fingers dug in, kneading roughly, "I'm going to be so happy." Satsuki swallowed harshly, feeling the hate rising in the back of her throat. She shifted her gaze and jerked as she laid eyes on Ryuko.

Her face was a mask of infantile jealousy, hands clenched into fists, her eyes trained on the hand massaging her breast. Satsuki didn't have the energy to snort as she would have given normal situations, but her brain grasped roughly at an idea, the closest thing she had had to a plan in days. Ryuko was jerking now, clearly unable to decide whether or not to strike.

*Could it be so easy?*

Satsuki lay her head back and moaned as dramatically as possible, forcing exaggerated wantonness into her tone. Nui opened her one eye wide, surprised and not at all taking the bait, but Ryuko was hooked. A spark blazed up in her eyes as her teeth bared back to the molars.

"I told you... *not to fucking touch!* " Faster than Satsuki could register, Ryuko lunged and swiped at Nui, somehow managing to clock her in the side of the head. She instantly became a speeding pink bullet, crashing through bars and crushing waist-deep into the wall behind. Satsuki gasped and pressed her biceps against her ears as her cage shrieked and twisted, folding in on itself. Her feet touched the ground and she crumpled to her knees, her chain limp

on the ground. A sudden force against her head crushed her to the ground, leaving her dazed and near-senseless as a cross-bar of metal over her neck forced her face into the floor. Gasping for air, legs crushed by the roof of her cage, she struggled to stay conscious, vision dampened by large black spots.

Panting, Ryuko stood in a near-crouch, arms hanging like an ape's, her tongue lolling from her mouth as she waited for Nui to strike back. Nui pulled free from the wall and promptly dusted off her shoulders before hopping over and kissing Ryuko on the cheek as though nothing had even happened.

"Silly pickle... Come on, Mama's waiting for us." Shocked into submission, Ryuko nodded, the glow of heat under her eyes subsiding. Satsuki found she couldn't stay awake any longer; her eyes lost their focus and fluttered shut as she was pulled free and picked up. Unfeeling, she folded limply over the arm looped around her waist.

*Stay awake. Stay awake.*

*Stay...*

---

She awoke to her mother taking her under the chin.

"My, Ryuko has certainly put you through your paces." It was all she could do to keep an incoherent groan from passing her lips. Satsuki struggled to stand, her legs scrabbling as if in slow-motion against the pavement. "No matter. All is coming to an end. Humanity has run its course." Her voice rose into a boom, hysteria adding a sharp, high bite. Fibers wrapped up Satsuki's arms to her shoulders and held her upright. She did not struggle. Ragyo had grown massive, cocooned in shinra Koketsu, glowing like a dying star.

*This is it. This is all. Can it be over?*

" Revelation has come upon you! Sweet Satsuki, are you prepared for the eternity you have molded?"

*No, no. Not...* The threads pulled her, tugging her close. She did not have the strength to struggle. Koketsu had opened, welcoming her. Out of the corner of her eye, she managed to catch a glimpse of the original life fiber settling softly over its transmitter. *No, no, so soon?*

The threads were all around her now, wrapping around every inch of her, pushing into her mouth, her nose. *No. Ryuko. Will she...?* She was pressed bodily to her mother now, her skin growing hot with the friction of the shifting fibers. Still, just before they invaded her ears completely and cut off all sound, she thought she heard Ryuko scream, long and loud and full of rage.

Darkness.

*STOP! Stop... no...*

Nothing.

---

Phew! One more chapter to go. Hopefully it will go up within the next week or I am absolutely fucked.